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SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN VIEWS ON HELSINKI OSCE MINISTERIAL

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Classified by: Economic-Political Counselor J. Dean Yap for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Polchief discussed reftel points December 3 with Ulrike Butschek, Counselor at the Austrian mission to the OSCE. Butschek said the GOA shares the USG's goals concerning a ministerial declaration, and agrees that a weak declaration would be worse than none. She said she is not optimistic about reaching agreement on a strong statement, and believes it likely that participants will fail to issue a statement, as has happened in the past. The problem is not the OSCE, but Russia, which is unlikely to make compromises that would allow for a worthwhile declaration, she said.

¶2. (C) Butschek said the EU is divided into two schools of thought concerning President Medvedev's Security Treaty Proposal and President Sarkozy's call to discuss European security at an OSCE summit next year. One group of EU states believes that such a dialogue could be useful, and that the OSCE is the appropriate venue. A second group maintains that a security treaty should be agreed before a summit is scheduled, and that a summit should serve only as an opportunity to sign the document. Austria belongs to the first group, and would likely offer to serve as host to a summit, she said. Polchief stressed the importance of preserving the "acquis" commitments, and the need to press Russia to resume implementation of the CFE Treaty and allow OSCE monitors unfettered access to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Butschek replied that the GOA shares those views, but does not believe there is any way to force a change in Russian behavior. A summit on European security seems as good an approach as any to engage the Russians, she averred.  
GIRARD-DICARLO